

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XIV, Issue No. 070

WEDNESDAY MARCH 10, 2004

www.saipantribune.com 50¢

I N S I D E

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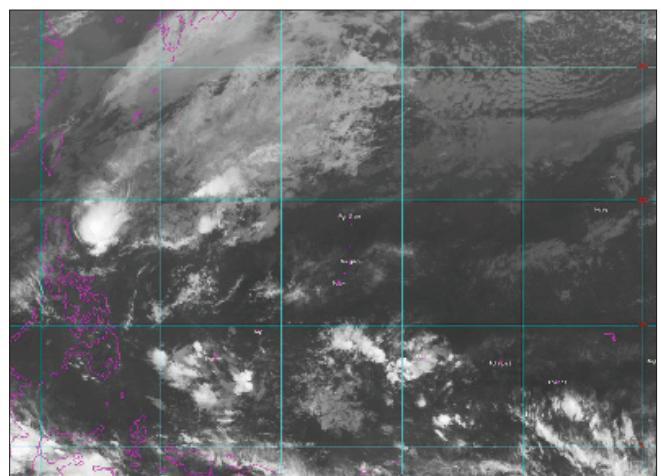
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Local

PTC-CAPRICCIOSA

CARS UNLIMITED

CENTURY
TRAVEL


**COMMUNITY
Briefs**
WEATHER FORECAST


PICTURE TIME: 1:00 AM., MARCH 9, 2004
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Fresh to strong trade winds across much of Micronesia converging into lighter winds near the Equator are producing scattered showers between the Equator and 8N from 130E to 153 and between the Equator and 6N from 160E to 180. A cold front stretches from 25N 161E to 20N 146E and continues as a shear line to 19N 130E. Low- and mid-level clouds...light rain and showers associated with this feature extend up to 200 miles north of the boundary. Trade wind convergence south of the cold front/shear line is producing low clouds and showers between 12N and 18N from 132E to 150E. This area includes the Mariana Islands.


SAIPAN AND TINIAN

Partly cloudy with isolated showers.

Winds: East at 15-20 mph. Highs near 87. Lows near 76.


GUAM AND ROTA

Partly cloudy with isolated showers.

Winds: East at 15-20 mph. Highs near 87. Lows near 76.


PALAU

Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.

Winds: Northeast at 15 kt.


POHNPEI

Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.

Winds: Northeast at 15 kt.


YAP AND ULITHI

Partly cloudy with isolated showers.

Winds: Northeast at 15-20 kt.


KOSRAE

Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.

Winds: East at 10-15 kt.


CHUUK

Partly cloudy with isolated showers.

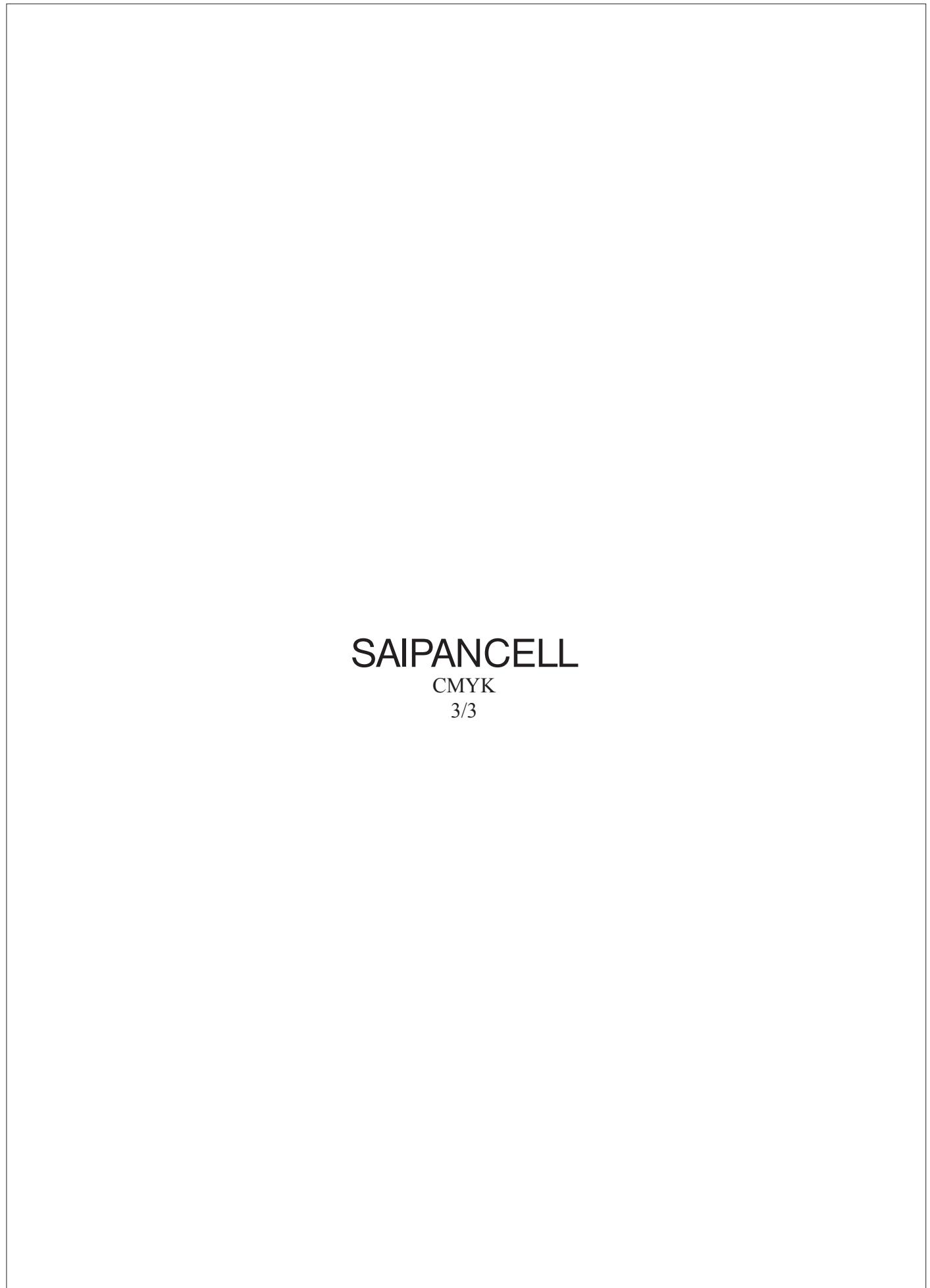
Winds: Northeast at 15-20 kt.


MAJURO

Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.

Winds: East at 15-20 kt.

CITY	FORECAST	HIGH	LOW
Auckland	Sunny	71F (22C)	60F (16C)
Beijing	Sunny	65F (18C)	48F (9C)
Hong Kong	Sunny	74F (23C)	61F (16C)
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	82F (28C)	68F (20C)
London, England	Sunny	45F (7C)	30F (-1C)
Los Angeles	Sunny	79F (26C)	59F (15C)
Manila	Partly Cloudy	88F (31C)	73F (23C)
Melbourne	Sunny	75F (24C)	59F (15C)
Miami	Partly Cloudy	72F (22C)	54F (12C)
New York City	Cloudy	40F (4C)	34F (1C)
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	37F (3C)	25F (-4C)
Paris	Partly Cloudy	38F (3C)	25F (-4C)
Pusan	Partly Cloudy	53F (12C)	39F (4C)
Rome	Cloudy	49F (9C)	30F (-1C)
Salem, Oregon	Partly Cloudy	60F (16C)	40F (4C)
San Francisco	Sunny	68F (20C)	52F (11C)
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	47F (8C)	35F (2C)
Tokyo, Japan	Partly Cloudy	42F (6C)	36F (2C)
Washington, DC	Cloudy	45F (7C)	34F (1C)



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Opinion

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XIV, Issue No. 89

Published daily at 2/F Century Insurance Building,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

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EDITORIAL

A finger in the federal pie

Nineteen years since the signing of the first of three seven-year funding agreements with the United States that provided millions of dollars to the CNMI, the Legislature is finally waking up to the question of where all that money has been going and has cast a moist eye at the idea of having some say on how it should be spent.

In a session held on Rota, the leadership of the House of Representatives has held forth that the Legislature's power to appropriate should be expanded in scope to include federal monies being funneled to the Commonwealth, particularly the millions being provided under the Covenant's Section 702, the Compact impact aid, or special appropriations funding that fall our way. This they did with the passage of House Bill 14-144 that defines the procedure of who exactly has discretionary power to disburse the financial assistance monies.

This came soon after the Office of Interior Affairs clarified to the lower chamber that it does not interfere with the insular governments in how federal monies are being divvied up. According to Nick Pula, "the involvement of the legislature in future Covenant grants is entirely a matter of local law and policies. The Office of Insular Affairs does not get involved in matters internal to the insular governments."

Indeed, it is high time that the Legislature, being the traditional holder of the fiscal purse strings, should make it its business to know how the Executive Branch is spending federal monies. More, it should have the power to have a say on where it goes. For far too long, federal monies have been treated like a bottomless pork barrel, with the governor having the sole say on how and where they should be spent, only because of the absence of a local statute that required legislative say-so. That is too much power resting in the hands of just one person.

More, the Executive Branch has a tendency to be recalcitrant in how it disburses these funds. To be sure, the documents are a matter of public record but actual practice has shown that, when it comes to the Open Government Act, the Executive Branch is so much better at paying lip service to the idea of transparency than in actually practicing it. The manner with which the Legislature conducts its business lends itself to a more transparent process, with appropriations going through floor deliberations and spirited debate and bills that are accessible to the public domain. With their limited two-year terms, lawmakers are also more sensitive to public opinion and tend to be more circumspect in how they disburse public funds, at least when it comes to monies not appropriated through constitutional mandate.

Expect to see more fireworks from this, though. The Executive Branch has had more than enough time to get comfortable with the practice of having sole authority and power over these millions and having the Legislature muscling in at having a share in the decision-making pie will definitely be an unwelcome intrusion from its perspective. It will then be up to the Legislature to come up with the political resolve to make this happen.



Help needed for the 'unbanked'

By MOTOO NOGUCHI
Special to The Washington Post

A foreign worker in New York needs to send \$200 to relatives in his home country. Instead of visiting a bank, he goes to a small office and makes his request to a man sitting at a simple desk with a fax machine and a note pad. Hours later the money is in the hands of his family on the other side of the world.

The worker used what financial regulators call an alternative remittance system. These informal money transfer operations are known by different names around the world: hawala@ in much of the Islamic world, fei ch'ien@ in Hong Kong, padala@ in the Philippines, hundi@ in India, phoei kwan@ in Thailand and the black market peso exchange in Latin America.

They all have one thing in common: They request little information from users. After the money is transferred, minimal records of the transaction are maintained. A code word, rather than identification, is often used to receive money. And operators rely on trust and ethnic relationships, not on documents and bank regulations, to ensure that transactions are fair and credible.

This secrecy and anonymity pose difficult problems for financial regulators and law enforcement officials. International requirements that financial institutions report suspicious transactions and know the identities of their customers are nonexistent with alternative remittance systems. They operate outside the control and supervision of government authorities.

The opacity of these systems makes them attractive for organizations that want to launder drug money, finance terrorist operations or hide funds for other illegal activities. Since the terrorist attacks in the United States on Sept. 11, 2001, some investigators have called for cracking down on alternative remittance systems.

But the situation is not that simple. These systems are used by millions of people around the world, many of whom are poor and have no access to banks. In some countries, a large percentage of money transfers is based on such informal methods. Often these systems predate the formal banking sector by centuries.

The fact that so many people use alternative remittance systems is testament to their effectiveness. They are usually shoestring operations that charge lower fees than bank wire transfers. They are often open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In comparison with bank money transfers, which can take three to five days, these informal systems can move money across the globe in hours. Dealers in the

alternative remittance system also operate even in remote regions, such as the Pakistan-Afghan border, where there are few banks.

There are drawbacks to these systems. Operators sometimes exploit users with extraordinarily high fees, or they manipulate the foreign exchange rate. And there is little recourse for consumers, since they are using informal systems.

The legal situation surrounding alternative remittance systems is complex. They are legal in some countries and illegal in others. The majority of transactions are for legitimate purposes. The challenge is to protect the legitimate users of informal money transfer systems while rooting out the terrorists and other criminals. It will not be easy.

Attempts to register or license these operators are an important first step. This should be done carefully so as not to drive the systems further underground. It should also be coordinated with public awareness programs that inform people of the benefits of using licensed money transfer systems.

If users of such alternative systems were being adequately served by the formal banking system, they wouldn't need other options. Modernizing the formal banking sector in countries where these systems flourish is vital to providing an effective and transparent option for people to move money across borders.

In a study on the issue, the Asian Development Bank found that one midway point between alternative remittance systems and the long-term goal of establishing a more user-friendly formal banking sector is to design innovative, legal remittance methods that target certain groups. A special system could be used to deliver money for overseas workers in a specific country, for example.

Once people have a competitive legal option to send money, and they begin to move away from informal dealers, it will be easier for the authorities to track terrorists and criminals who still use the older system.

Improving the formal financial sector will bring millions of people into the banking system. The "unbanked," as people without bank accounts are called, have fewer opportunities for economic development. Reforming alternative remittance systems is not just a powerful law enforcement strategy; it is a way to improve the lives of millions of vulnerable people around the world.

The writer, a prosecutor in Tokyo and former counsel at the Asian Development Bank, has worked on terrorist-financing and money-laundering issues.

Catching up with Kerry

By JIM SHEA
THE HARTFORD COURANT

In the chair lift line, Sun Valley, Idaho:
 Yo, Senator Kerry, can I ride up with you?
 I guess.
 Wow, I'm surprised to see you here.
 Why is that?
 Just thought you'd be out battling the old Bushmeister.
 I'm on vacation.
 What, like a mandatory vacation, use it or lose, doctor's orders, that kind of thing?
 No, it's purely optional.
 You chose to take a vacation at this time?
 I need to recharge my batteries.
 How come?
 Because I've been making a lot of mistakes.
 Like when you forgot the mike was still on and you called Bush a crook and a liar and scary?
 I said mistakes.
 Oh, like when you said you voted for the \$87 billion for Iraq before you voted against it.
 Like that.
 Or when you said foreign leaders were rooting for you to beat Bush?
 I think you have the gist of it.
 Man, you are one cool customer.
 Why do you say that?
 Because while you're out here skiing, the Bushies have been hammering you big time, running television ads aimed at defining you to the public.
 Let them. I know who I am.
 Well, that may be true, but 80 percent of the country doesn't.
 So you think these attack ads are successful?
 I'm no expert, Senator, but I just saw a poll that says seven of 10 Americans believe you were AWOL from the Texas Air National Guard during Vietnam, and George Bush was a decorated war hero.
 Really.
 Not only that, but a majority of people also think you are married to Jane Fonda.
 Next you're going to tell me that voters see me as inarticulate, disengaged and a right-wing radical.
 Well, there is that growing perception, not to mention ... um, Senator, were you actually responsible for trading away Sammy Sosa?
 Look, don't you worry. I'll show people. I'm a fighter.
 You're not thinking of staging a photo-op driving a tank by any chance?
 As a matter of fact ...
 Never mind. Look, Senator, while you're out, people are starting to make jokes about you.
 They are? Let me hear one.
 OK, here's one Jay Leno told:
 "The Secret Service has announced it is doubling its protection for John Kerry. You can understand why—with two positions on every issue, he has twice as many people mad at him."
 I don't get it.
 I know, Senator, I know.

Decision Time

By KELLY HERRINGTON
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

SCHENECTADY, N.Y.—They tell me their greatest accomplishments. They discuss their life goals. They say who inspires them. They address their weaknesses. They make me laugh. They cause me to shed a few tears. And they consistently evoke my admiration.

I am not their parent. I am not their teacher. I am not their coach, sibling, grandparent, best friend or religious leader. I am a college admissions officer, and "they" are my applicants.

I know that for thousands of them the mystery of selective admissions provokes immense anxiety. But they should rest assured that their files are being read by admissions counselors who are both humbled and exhilarated by what they find inside. Every winter, when I sit for hours at a stretch at the small desk in my apartment reading the applications, I find myself en-

tering a world of hope, hard work, resiliency, accomplishment and promise.

I learn about students like Sarah, whose college counselor describes her as a combination of "Jane Goodall, Mother Theresa, Diane Sawyer and Jodie Foster." I'm intrigued by essays from students like Matt, who begins, "The person I admire most in life is a convicted felon." (The felon turns out to be an international human rights advocate, and Matt's ultimate goal is to become a human rights lawyer.) I review college interview reports that describe students like Dave explaining how their classroom experiences have been "transformed" by teachers who "dress up as Einstein to make physics cool." I smile when students like John send articles about contests they have won. "The six hundred crazed students crammed into the gym were incredibly loud," John explains. "The training was endless, but the war would be decided in an instant. I vied for the crowd's

undivided attention and nothing would stand in my way. In two short minutes I stood up and proclaimed victory. I won East High School's Pie Eating Contest."

"Reading season," as that time of year is called, allows those of us in college admissions access not only to outstanding students, but also to altruistic, artistic, athletic, ambitious and downright zany young men and women. We spend our days with students, teachers, communities and families at their best.

If only it would last. But reading season culminates inevitably in "decision time." The delight I have just found in students and educators quickly evaporates. Parents force their children to make last-minute visits to campuses before deposit deadlines. Principals proudly tout the numbers of

their students who were admitted to select institutions, thereby devaluing the rest. Admissions deans rave to their trustees about the increased SAT averages in the admitted applicant pool, yet gloss over the creativity, leadership and commitments to community service unmeasured by standardized test scores. Journalists run articles about the stress related to making "one of life's most important decisions."

It is at this time of year, in the dreaded month

The Historian and the Believer

(A second installment in a series of four reflections arising out of the controversy generated by Mel Gibson's movie, the *Passion of the Christ*.)

"Jesus was a bastard!"

Thus, a professor in New Testament studies declared to a group of young University students in the late sixties in a northwest Texas town. The tender shoots amongst us shivered at the shaking of the foundations of our warm, evangelical piety inured to the image of the genteel head of Christ, or the blonde-hair-and-blue-eyed White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestant masculine portrait of Jesus. Hollywood after all would shave Jeff Hunter's armpit as the crucified Christ to allay Victorian sensibilities. How dare this pipsqueak of a professor call the Lord of History a "bastard"?

The professor was a meek, mild mannered Greek scholar. His parents were missionaries to China. He attended one of the Ivy League Universities in the eastern seaboard of the United States while his parents were incarcerated in a Japanese concentration camp. Later, he sat under not a few visiting European theologians who were struggling with the angst of the post-Holocaust faith of the Judeo-Christian tradition, which saw Christianity used as an instrument of Nazi genocidal ideology. With his faith challenged by the new scientific, secular and urban ethos of the times, he wrestled with the implications of being a historian in a religious community that thrived on the currency of many critically unexamined beliefs.

He was not out to denigrate the integrity of Jesus' birth and pedigree by his declaration. "Bastard," devoid of its pejorative outer coating simply means "illegitimate." He said he was using it in that sense. He pointed out that in the Gospel accounts, Jesus was referred to invariably as "Jesus, the son of Mary." In a patriarchal society, one was referred to by one's paternity. Jesus would have had to be referred as the "son of Joseph." That was not the case. Historically, he said, Jesus was an illegitimate child!

Of course, he did not fool any of us. He was making a point about our inability to see the difference between the "historical Jesus" and the "Christ of faith," a distinction that was none existent to many of Christianity's religious faithful until the onset of the rigorous requirements of historical thought in the 20th Century. In the Gospel narratives, "Jesus, the son of Mary" was declared not for its historical facticity but for its religious significance. Jesus' later attestation as the second mask (persona) in the triune face of awesome reality (the Jewish YHWH, the Greek theos) required a virgin birth, not unlike the other "gods" of the surrounding cultures.

The professor meant to make us be aware that we are normally historical thinkers, creatures of our time, until we make religious assertions, at which time, we suspend critical thought. We revert back to the mythological thought forms that richly colored previous religious imagery but has since become alien to the stringent factual basis of knowledge and wisdom in our time.

To needle us further, he reminded the class that "Christ is not the family name of Jesus." Christos is Greek for the Aramaic word "Messiah," or, "the expected one." Though intellectually aware, many in the class were from backgrounds steeped in wild, undisciplined literal interpretations of Biblical witness. Rising from sectarian perspectives of ancestors who escaped European religious persecution, they felt assaulted by the thought forms subscribed to by the professor. Some in fact were deeply resentful. They expected the learned scholar to strengthen their faith by affirming the comfortable beliefs nursed in their cushioned pews and air-conditioned assemblies.

To Mel Gibson's credit, at least, he kept the title of his movie, the

By JAIME VERGARA

Strictly a personal view. Vergara writes a weekly column for the Saipan Tribune.



Passion of the CHRIST, and not of Jesus. Properly understood, it is a theological assertion rather than a journalistic reporting of a historical event. To Mel Gibson's discredit, he plays on the lingering trails of mythological thinking to blur this distinction.

Mel Gibson's story is not the same story as those created by the authors the New Testament books. He adds his own elaboration. Some of the things he adds include a mythological figure in a hood that drifts in and out of the story. Jesus is dangled off a bridge where Judas is hiding. Jesus says, "Don't call the others; I don't want them to see me like this," in the Garden of Gethsemane, Pilate's wife brings white cloths with which Jesus' mother and Mary Magdalene wipe up the blood from Jesus' scourging. Throughout, someone is senselessly striking Jesus. Most sickening is the long scene in which a gang of sadistic, grinning soldiers beats Jesus almost to death. Nothing like this appears in any of the New Testament gospels.

In Mark, this is the entire account of Jesus' flogging: "And as Pilate wanted to satisfy the crowd, he set Barabbas free for them, and after having Jesus flogged turned him over to be crucified." (Mark 15:16)

Gibson portrays a different story. The New Testament passion stories have humor, irony, and spirit challenge. Gibson's story has brutality, melodrama, and sentimentality. Gibson's story is a piece of sadomasochistic pornography parading as religious piety. Apparently, there is a market for it. But any sensitive person seeing this movie might well ask, "If this movie has anything to do with Christianity, why would anyone want to be a Christian?"

Many Christ-identified persons are distracted from the real point of the ancient passion narratives by not understanding that they are stories created to make a spiritual point.

To be sure, the quest for the historical Jesus in our time has been a liberating enterprise as it continuously reveals that the images we have had of Jesus has been mostly in the image of the beholder. In religious iconography, pictures of Jesus depicted the cultural features of the time of visualization, as well as the spirit mood of the artists making the depictions. Even those of the New Testament witnesses whose narratives were out to proclaim a good news (gospel) did this shortly after the Fall of Jerusalem, a good forty years after Jesus' crucifixion. Their portrait was that of a Christ "our Lord and Savior", not the Jesus of the carpenter's shop. It would be more accurate to say that there is one Jesus, many Christs.

While we are creatures of our time, the lingering influences of ghosts from ages past remain, be it the sense of the taotaoona in the Marianas, the legend of the sleepy hollow, or, the martyred priest singing the "Te Deum" with his head tucked under the crook of his arm. Mel Gibson opted to sacrifice his historical sense at the altar of relished religious beliefs. Many continue to do the same.

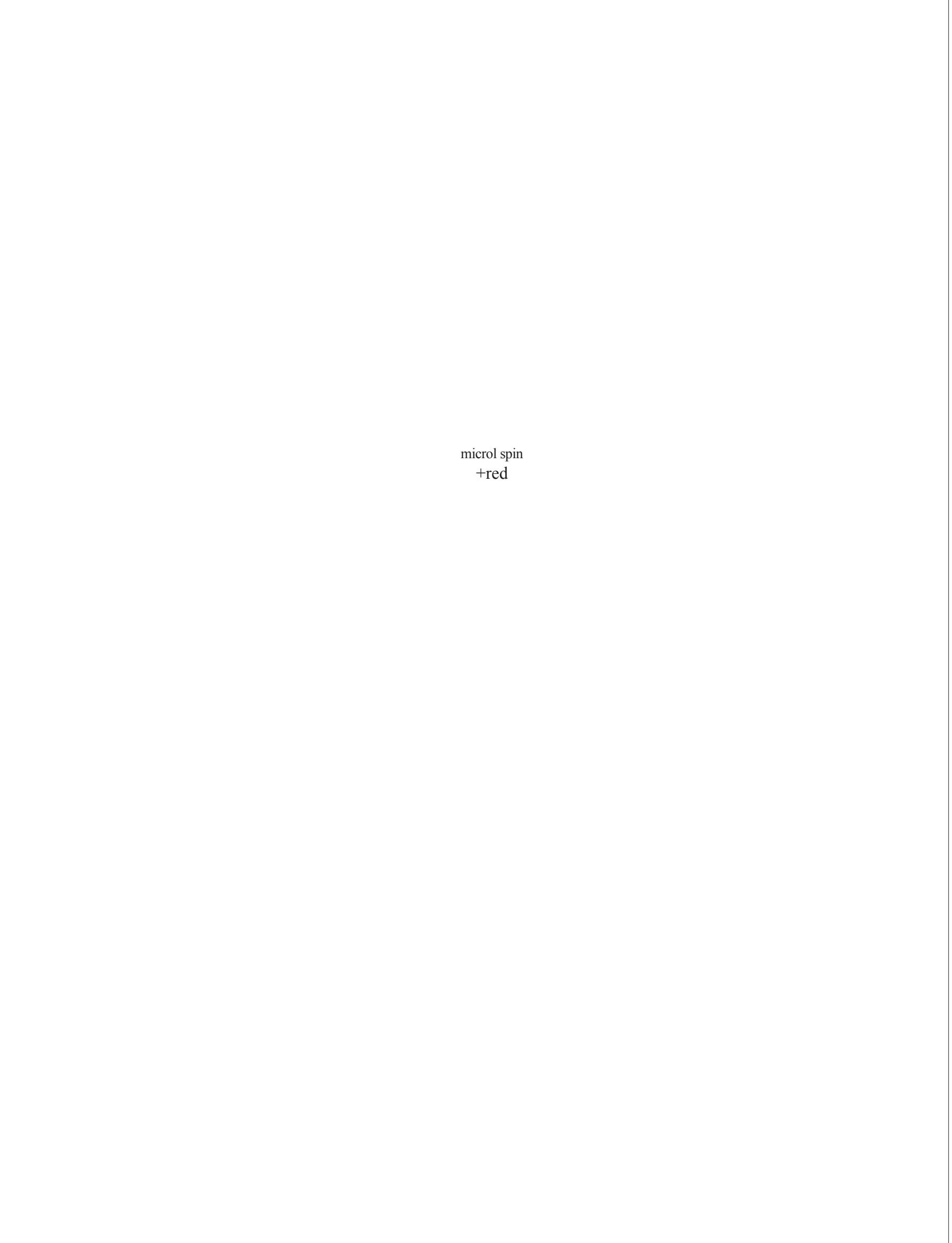
I have chosen to travel my faith in the plains of history. I characterize my spirit sense as along the lines of one who was "first among many brothers" in obedience to God, and love of neighbor. I clothe the same in the scientific, secular and urban language of my time.

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START

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microl spin
+red

Business

Palau Air to offer public stock ownership

But airline needs to work on SEC requirements before IPO, says counsel

By RAFFY H. ARROYO
BUSINESS EDITOR

Palau Rock Island Air Inc. will soon be giving the people of the CNMI the option of owning stocks in its planned regional airline.

According to Alan R. Seid, president of Palau Micronesia Air, the airline's counsel are working on the requirements

for an initial public offering in the CNMI.

"We like to give the local people of the CNMI the opportunity to invest in this project," said Seid in an interview with reporters, prior to a public presentation about the airline Saturday at the Dai-Ichi Hotel Saipan Beach. "We believe in giving the people of our region

a role in this as part of our vision of a true regional air carrier."

The planned public offering had been in the works for some time until the company's attorneys learned of additional requirements before they could sell shares of stocks in the CNMI.

"We have not sold one single share here yet. We have worked on most of the requirements but at the last minute, we discovered there are some more requirements pertaining to US security laws," said Seid.

According to Gregory Koebel of the Saipan-based O'Connor, Berman Dotts & Banes law office, counsel for Palau Air, public stock offerings are governed by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

"There are registration requirements," said Koebel, "but there could be exemptions for small cap companies, as long as you file a form D within 15 days after selling the first share to the public."

The filing, which Koebel said, could take about a month, may also require the airline to register in one of the states, so counsel would seek a determina-

nation if Palau could be considered a state.

"Palau Micronesian Air is registered in Palau, so we now have to find out whether or not Palau could be considered a state under SEC rules," said Koebel.

"If not, then we are going to have to register it from out of here (CNMI). Or we could register the airline out of Guam, Hawaii or any other state in the U.S.," he said.

According to Seid, plans are for the sale of about \$200,000 worth of shares to residents of the CNMI or about 2,000 shares of stock at \$100 per share.

"We have sold over \$300,000 in Palau, \$100,000 in Yap and we also plan to sell over \$150,000 in Pohnpei, and there would be no minimum or maximum," he said.

According to Seid, he had seen people buy one share and as much as \$20,000 in shares.

Presently, the biggest buyer of the airline's stock is Surangel & Sons, a conglomerate in Palau that owns department stores and other businesses. It currently holds \$1 million worth of company shares of stock.



RAFFY H. ARROYO

Palau Micronesia Air President Alan R. Seid explains the airline's plans and goals during a public presentation Saturday at Dai-Ichi Hotel's Hibiscus Hall.

which would be taken out of a \$5 million Taiwanese loan recently approved by Palau Congress and signed late last week.

Palau Air needs some \$5 million in start up capital to commence service. Seid said it has received some \$3.5 million in financial commitments to date.

The CNMI government was initially expected to put a \$500,000 investment in the new airline but such a plan faced opposition from the Commonwealth Development Authority.

Meanwhile, Palau Air is undertaking final inspections and checks for its 737-300 aircraft, which would be used to service its planned routes.

Palau Air hopes to soon launch its initial routes covering the islands of Koror, Yap, Guam Chuuk and Pohnpei. It plans to start with a twice a week flight direct to and from Guam to Palau, and two flights to Manila back to Koror. The flights will connect to one flight a week to Saipan and two flights a week to Darwin, Australia.

Verizon introduces Nights & Weekends cellular phone plan

Verizon Pacifica is offering their subscribers more cellular freedom with new airtime rates and plans that would give them up to 75 percent more cellular minutes on all their plans.

Verizon has just introduced its Free Unlimited Nights & Weekends Plan that lets customers talk free into the night and during the weekends.

"We're pleased to bring this plan to the market along with our Unlimited Cellular Plan," says Hans Mickelson, Verizon product manager, "our customers now have two beneficial unlimited plans available for them."

According to Mickelson, customers that currently have any Verizon airtime plan can simply come in and add on Free Unlimited Nights & Weekends for a flat charge of \$17.99 per month.

"It's really a fantastic deal," said Russ Quinn, Verizon Marketing Manager. "Everyone has different lifestyles and work schedules. For individuals who like to take advantage of free weekend and weeknight calls, this add-on plan can certainly save them a lot of money."

The Free Unlimited Nights & Weekends Plan starts weeknights at 7pm to 6:59am the following morning and on the weekends from 7pm-Fridays to 6:59am Monday mornings.

To sign-up for this new add-on plan visit the Verizon showroom at the Verizon Customer Service Center in Chalan Laulau or call Customer Service at 234-7143.

announcement of the public

staywell
+blue

gardenia filipino night
+red

Gates: Technology will change advertising

By ALLISON LINN
AP BUSINESS WRITER

REDMOND, Wash. (AP)—It's time to stop taking TV addicts for granted, Microsoft chairman Bill Gates told advertising executives on Friday. For years, advertisers depended on the prototypical couch potato who sat through commercials while waiting for the next television show to arrive on the screen.

Now, Gates said, advertising executives need to prepare for a world in which people will watch TV how and when they want to—and advertisers will need to figure out how to get commercials to them anyway.

The pace of technological development won't just influence the way we do everything



It's also poised to change how advertising reaches people.

Gates is one of many in the technology industry who have raised this issue over the past few years, and he admits that it's still not clear how technology will eventually change advertising.

"Nobody has a crystal ball that says how this is going to come out," Gates said.

But for advertisers—and their target audiences—he said there are pluses and minuses to such a new world.

Gates noted that new technology will create better possibilities for targeting advertisements to certain demographics, such as by age, geography or gender. He cited an oft-used example in which a person walks by a store or billboard with a cell

Bill Gates, chief software architect of Microsoft Corporation, speaks to a gathering of advertisers and internet industry representatives during the Fifth Annual MSN Strategic Account Summit held at the company's headquarters in Redmond, Wash.

from talk with friends to make business deals, Gates said at a Microsoft conference for advertising and marketing executives.

phone, and the advertisement is immediately targeted to that person because the cell phone identifies who it is.

But new technology also means advertisers will have to find a balance between targeting audiences and annoying them.

Online pop-up advertisements seemed like a good idea once, Gates noted, but went too far. Now many companies, including Microsoft and the Internet search engine Google, are making software to block those ads.



The day's gasoline prices are displayed at a service station Friday, March 26, 2004, in Chicago.

As gas prices increase, so do thefts at pump

ATLANTA (AP)—When gas thieves strike Salim Gillani's Chevron station, all they leave behind is a leaky pump. "It's like they're driving the pace car at a NASCAR race," said Gillani, whose station is near one of Atlanta's interstate highways. "Catching them, that's the hard part."

With record-high gas prices, more people are speeding away from the pump without paying for fill-ups that can cost as much as \$40 a tank.

Gas retailers are reporting theft increases of 200 percent to 300 percent over the last couple months, said Jeff Lenard, spokesman for the National Association of Convenience Stores. On average, stations lost \$919 per year from thefts in 2002, down from \$2,253 per store in 2000 and \$1,032 in 2001.

"Gas is getting to be a fairly large expense. People who are struggling to make ends meet are more likely to drive off," said Jason Toews, co-founder of Gasbuddy.com, which tracks gas prices nationwide.

The average national retail

price of gasoline stood at a record \$1.76 per gallon Friday. The U.S. Department of Energy predicts prices could reach \$1.83 this spring.

As prices go up, so do the number of reported gas thefts.

Gas stations are usually hit during the busiest times of day—often when lottery numbers come in, Gillani said.

The culprits generally park at the pump farthest from the cashier, and they sometimes wear hats so they can't be identified.

Then the pump is left on the ground so the station employee doesn't know the car is finished filling up, and the thieves are usually gone before anyone notices.

"It is a misdirected frustration toward retailers. It is not a Robin Hood crime. It is not robbing from the rich and giving to the poor," Lenard said. "It's robbing from people who are already suffering."

Service stations used to be hit maybe once a month by gas thieves. Now, Gillani said he deals with the problem two or three times a week.

hanmi golf

Asia

Taiwanese protest election

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Nearly 500,000 people, many clad in throwaway yellow ponchos against a cold drizzle, surrounded Taiwan's presidential office and blocked major streets Saturday to protest last weekend's disputed presidential election.

President Chen Shui-bian promised again Saturday night to back a recount of the election that he narrowly won, and endorsed an investigation into the bizarre shooting that lightly wounded him shortly before the vote.

Many protesters said the shooting gave Chen an unfair, last-minute boost at the polls. Others believe conspiracy theories that the president staged the shooting.

"This was a very dirty election. We want the truth," said protester Carla Wang, a 56-year-old employee at a trading company.

Waving red Taiwanese flags, the protesters filled up the wide boulevards in front of the presidential office and spilled over into the side streets. Most were wearing disposable plastic rain ponchos to keep dry in a steady rain.

Some protesters brought a 15-foot-tall Statue of Liberty that had a tear in her eye and the slogan "Strive for Justice" written on her body in Chinese characters. The crowd totaled 470,000, according to the Taipei city government.

The massive rally went on despite a vague warning from rival China's saying that ongoing turmoil might become an excuse to take over the tiny island. Beijing has long insisted that Taiwan belongs to Chinese territory.

At the end of the four-hour rally, losing candidate Lien Chan of the Nationalist Party addressed the crowd and repeated his demands for a recount of the vote.

"If someone uses nasty means to gain power, such power won't be effective and won't be respected," said Lien, a 67-year-old former political science professor and ex-vice president.

Lien also demanded an inde-

pendent investigation into the bizarre election-eve shooting.

Lien never said whether he would accept the results of a recount, and he didn't mention the president's pledge to hold a recount.

During a late-night news conference, Chen repeated his willingness to hold a recount, and he promised that he would accept the results. He challenged Lien to do the same.

"We haven't rigged the election, so why should we fear a recount?" Chen said.

The prosecutor investigating the shooting has said he will invite famed forensic scientist Henry Lee, who worked on the O.J. Simpson and JonBenet Ramsey cases, to lead the investigation.

The president said that if Lien formally petitioned the courts to nullify the results, he would endorse the move and urge judges not to bother holding hearings on the evidence so that the recount could be done immediately.

Lien's handling of the controversy has been confusing. Sometimes he demands a recount, and other times he talks about holding the vote again. Sometimes he treats the unexplained shooting as the most important issue.



AP
Protestors gather to demand a vote recount during a massive rally Saturday, March 27, 2004, in Taipei, Taiwan

Moderate earthquake hits Tibet

HONG KONG (AP)—A strong earthquake struck the Chinese region of Tibet early Sunday, the Hong Kong Observatory said.

The observatory said the 5.8-magnitude quake struck 315 miles northwest of the Tibetan city of Lhasa at 2:52 a.m. Hong Kong time.

There was no immediate information about possible injuries or damage.

A magnitude 5 quake is capable of damaging buildings.

N. Korea nixes US nuclear demand

By SANG-HUN CHOE
AP WRITER

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea on Saturday rejected a U.S. demand for a "complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling" of its nuclear weapons programs, calling it a plot to start a war and overthrow the government.

The North's reiteration of its hard-line posture comes after Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing met reclusive North Korean leader Kim Jong Il earlier this week.

Li later said the two agreed to "push forward" toward a third round of six-nation talks on North Korea's nuclear programs.

North Korea's state-run Radio Pyongyang, monitored by South Korea's Yonhap news agency, said Saturday that it would never accept the U.S. demand that it first dismantle its nuclear facilities.

"Complete nuclear dismantling is a plot to overthrow the North's socialist system after stripping it of its nuclear deterrent at no cost at all. 'Verifiable

nuclear dismantling' reflects a U.S. intention to spy on our military capabilities before starting a war," it said.

"Irreversible nuclear dismantling" is nothing other than a noose to stifle us after eradicating our peaceful nuclear-energy industry," it added.

North Korea says it will allow nuclear inspections and dismantle its atomic facilities only if the United States provides economic aid and written guarantees that U.S. forces will not invade.

The communist country also insists that it will keep a nuclear program for power generation.

Washington demands that North Korea first dismantle all its nuclear facilities, saying it has previously broken international agreements not to develop nuclear weapons in return for oil and other economic aid.

Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency berated the joint U.S.-South Korea military drills that began last Sunday, calling them preparations for "pre-emptive nuclear strikes."

cars unlimited

Pakistan: Al-Qaida official hurt, hiding

By MATTHEW PENNINGTON
AP WRITER

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)-- A senior al-Qaida leader has been seriously wounded and is on the run, Pakistan's military spokesman said Saturday, while claiming that an operation to rid the western border areas of suspected terrorists has been a success.

But observers critical of the massive military sweep called it a political failure, citing the high number of troop casualties and officials' failure to capture any so-called "high-value targets."

Recently gathered intelligence and eyewitness accounts indicate that al-Qaida commander Tahir Yuldash was badly wounded and is in hiding, military spokesman Maj. Gen. Shaukat Sultan said. He admitted, though, that Pakistani forces are not close to capturing Yuldash.

"He might have slipped away, he's on the run," Sultan said.

Yuldash, also known as Tahir Yuldashev, is the leader of an Uzbek terror group - Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan - which Pakistani officials say has been subsumed by al-Qaida since the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States.

He was previously mentioned as one of two possible "high-value targets" cornered when

Pakistan's military began the sweep of South Waziristan on March 16.

Yuldash and his group were responsible for repeated car bombings and kidnappings in Uzbekistan before the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, a U.S. State Department report said. Since then, the group has fought alongside al-Qaida and Taliban forces, the report added.

Despite the apparent escape, Sultan said the operation in Pakistan's semiautonomous tribal areas had been successful. He said the military had killed 60 suspected militants and captured 163.

The army also took a militant hide-out, complete with communications equipment, underground tunnels and heavy weaponry. Sultan said the operation was in its final stages.

But the heavy casualties have led to disappointment and criticism, especially after President Gen. Pervez Musharraf stoked expectations by saying a prize capture - possibly Yuldash or al-Qaida No. 2 leader Ayman al-Zawahri - was cornered.

"As a military operation, it did not go well at all," said Talat Masood, a Pakistani military and political analyst. He said that security forces had failed to expect entrenched militant forces.

The lack of preparation left some 50 soldiers and at least a



Waris Khan Afridi, front, member of delegation to track down tribesmen wanted for sheltering terrorists, briefs residents of Wana in South Waziristan on Saturday. Pakistan is vowing to pursue its war on terrorism after the latest taped threat by Osama bin Laden's righthand man.

dozen civilians dead, and inflamed passions among religious hard-liners.

Musharraf, a key ally of the United States, has deployed 70,000 troops along the border with Afghanistan since the Sept. 11 attacks in an attempt to prevent cross-border attacks - the first such deployment since Pakistan gained independence from India in 1947.

U.S. and Afghan forces have deployed on the other side of the border as part of a new offensive against al-Qaida and Taliban forces in that country. Musharraf has said some U.S. experts are working with Pakistani troops, but no U.S. military forces have crossed into Pakistan.

Chinese activists postpone trip to disputed isles

BEIJING (AP)—Chinese activists on Saturday postponed their planned trip to a chain of uninhabited islands claimed by both China and Japan.

The group had planned to leave Sunday from the southeastern city of Xiamen and cross the Taiwan Straits to the Diaoyu Islands, located between Taiwan and Japan.

But the weeklong trip has been postponed because of "the situation across the Straits," said

Tong Zeng, a member of the China Federation for Defending the Diaoyu Islands, which describes itself as a non-governmental organization.

He didn't elaborate, but it was an apparent reference to political turmoil over recent presidential elections in Taiwan, and mainland China's warning that it would not "look on unconcerned" if the chaos continued. China claims Taiwan as its territory, though the two split amid

civil war in 1949.

Japan took control of the Diaoyu Islands when it defeated China in an 1895 war. The United States had jurisdiction over them after World War II until 1972, when they were handed back to Japan. China and Taiwan claim the islands have been theirs for centuries.

On Wednesday, seven activists from the federation were arrested by Japan's Coast Guard when they landed on one of the islands,

saying they wanted to draw attention to China's territorial claim.

They were deported Friday after being questioned and arrived in Shanghai's Pudong International Airport late in the evening.

The arrests came amid already tense relations between Tokyo and Beijing due to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's annual visits to a war shrine that Asian nations say glorifies Japan's militaristic past.

chamber

Nation

Hawaii might claim biological resources

By BRUCE DUNFORD
AP WRITER

HONOLULU (AP)—Hawaii could become the first state to stake a legal claim to hundreds of potentially valuable animal and plant products discovered on state lands, under a bill being considered by the state Legislature.

Hawaii is a good place to establish a system to protect government property rights to its plants and animals, supporters of the bill say. Of more than 22,000 known species on the islands, 8,850 are found only in Hawaii, said Naomi Arcand of the Hawaii Audubon Society.

"Rather than selling the exclusive rights to our natural re-

sources, we should focus initially on the method to achieve sustainable, equitable use," Arcand said.

State Rep. Glenn Wakai, the primary architect of the bill, said an estimated 5,000 bioprospecting projects are under way in Hawaii's rain forests, volcanic fields, teeming reefs and deep ocean chasms between the islands. He proposed a statewide inventory of them.

"We have no idea what these individuals and these companies are doing here, so this is a step to finding out," he said.

Hawaii's indigenous people have been key players in the bioprospecting legislation, hoping to protect their rights to gather plant and animal resources used in traditional and cultural me-

dicinal practices.

The bill's supporters said they did not know of any lucrative bioprospecting discoveries involving Hawaiian species, but they believe the potential is great.

Hawaii follows last year's lead by China, Brazil, India and nine other of the world's most biodiverse countries, who signed an alliance to fight "biopiracy" and press for rules protecting their people's rights to genetic resources found on their land.

That declaration was a response to complaints by Indians and environmentalists.

Three years ago, Yellowstone National Park began collecting royalties on the commercial results of scientific research in the park.

Rumsfeld: Rules still hinder the sharing of information

By DAFNA LINZER
AP WRITER

More than two years after the Bush administration won pledges of support from dozens of countries eager to join the war on terrorism, Washington and its allies still keep a jealous hold on intelligence - snarling the information sharing needed to shut down al-Qaida.

With public attention focused this week on the failures leading to the Sept. 11 attacks, officials acknowledged that information-sharing is a problem that will be difficult to change despite a new resolve on both sides of the Atlantic after the deadly bombings this month in Spain.

In his testimony before the bipartisan commission investigating the attacks on New York and Washington, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said this week that countries were cooperating and "sharing intelligence."

But there are rules involved when passing on information and those rules—designed to protect sources and methods—make it hard for countries to work together on counterterrorism.

One such restriction, known within the intelligence community as the "third-country rule," forbids the country receiving a tip from passing it along to anyone else.

The United States, France, Britain, Russia and other countries with large intelligence services all observe the third-party

rule. When they share intelligence, it is done bilaterally and the tips are often watered-down to protect sources.

"The originator of the intelligence controls the dissemination of the intelligence," said Vince Cannistraro, a former CIA counterterrorism chief. "That's the rule and that's problem."

Turkey, which suffered a string of four deadly bombings late last year, and has limited intelligence gathering capabilities outside its region, has been particularly frustrated by the rules as it tries to investigate a possible al-Qaida presence in the country.

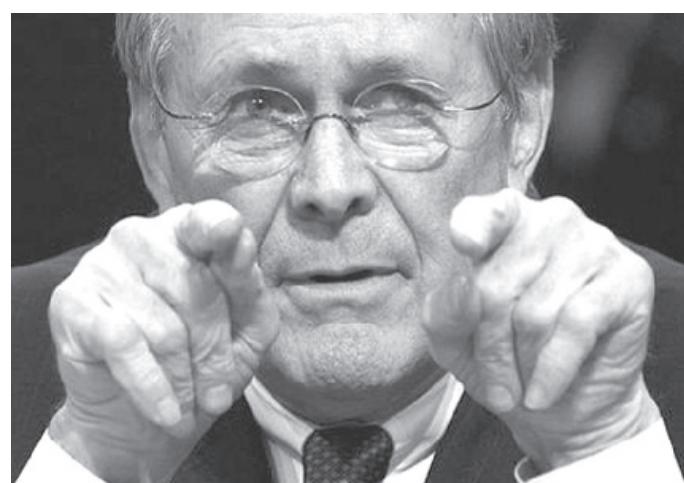
"There is a controlled flow of information from the U.S.," which makes it hard for Turkey to act, a frustrated Turkish intelligence officer told The Associated Press on

condition of anonymity.

Turkey has yet to solve the November, 2003, bombings that killed 62 people in Istanbul. Several suspects remain in custody, some of whom attended training camps in Afghanistan, but no one has been charged or directly tied to Osama bin Laden's network.

Spain has made several arrests in connection with the train bombings there and has tied one of the suspects—a Moroccan named Jamal Zougam—to an al-Qaida cell.

Zougam was known to intelligence services in the United States and three other countries before the attacks that killed 190 people. But there was no joint investigation underway and Morocco, Spain and France were unaware of information their agencies were gathering independently.



AP

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld testifies before the federal panel reviewing the Sept. 11 attacks in Washington, Tuesday.

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Kerry slams White House attack on Clarke

By NEDRA PICKLER
AP WRITER

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—John Kerry said Saturday the White House is committing character assassination with its treatment of former counter-terror chief Richard Clarke to avoid responding to questions about national security.

Kerry also said Condoleezza Rice, President Bush's national security adviser, should testify in public before the commission investigating the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks.

"If Condoleezza Rice can find time to do '60 Minutes' on television before the American people, she ought to find 60 minutes to speak to the commission under oath," Kerry told reporters. "We're talking about

the security of our country."

The White House has said that presidential staff advisers, such as Rice, cannot testify publicly before congressional bodies. The bipartisan, independent commission was created in 2002 by congressional legislation and Bush's signature.

Rice has been interviewed privately by commission members.

Bush campaign spokeswoman Nicolle Devenish said Kerry and other Democrats are trying to politicize the work of the commission.

"John Kerry seeks to distract Americans from his own failed ideas for protecting America from future attacks," she said in a statement. "John Kerry's backward-looking approach would return us to the failed policies of treating terror as a

law-enforcement matter."

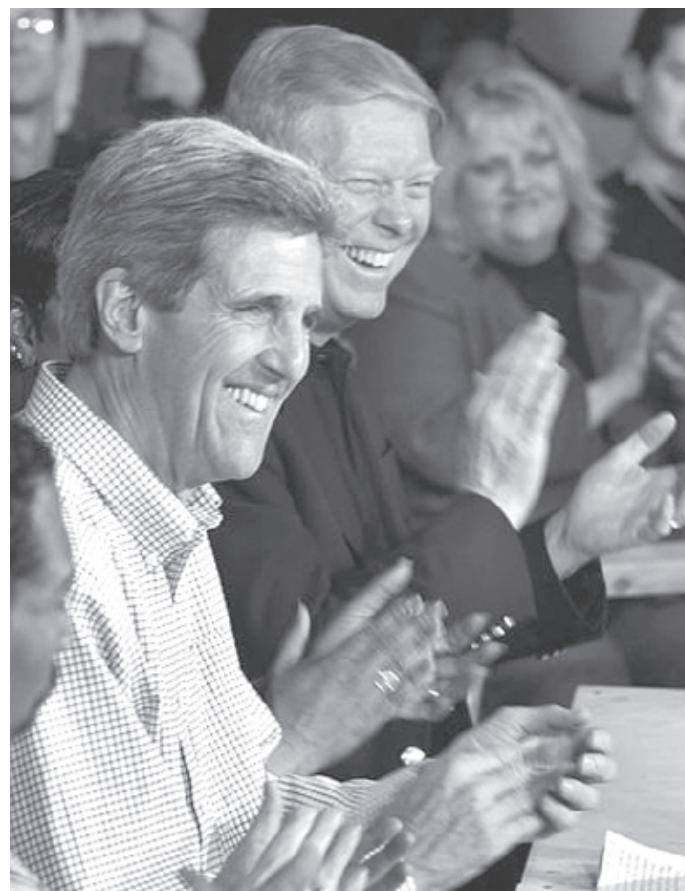
Kerry said the constitutional separation of powers could be protected despite the White House's objections.

"Certainly we can find a way to respect executive privilege, not to have it be an opening to the door, but nevertheless to accomplish America's needs to protect the security of our country," he said.

On Clarke, Kerry said: "Every time somebody comes up and says something that this White House doesn't like, they don't answer the questions about it or show you the truth about it. They go into character assassination mode."

Besides Clarke, Kerry cited the examples of former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill and Medicare accountant Richard Foster.

"It is entirely inappropriate



and almost hysterical of the White House to engage in this massive character assassination," Kerry said later in an interview with Kansas City television station KMBC.

O'Neill was fired as Treasury secretary in December 2002 after publicly questioning the need for additional tax cuts, a core campaign issue for Bush. Foster said he was prohibited by his superiors from sharing with Congress a much higher but more accurate cost estimate for the administration's Medicare program.

Kerry said until the commission completes its report, he will comment neither on Clarke's testimony nor on whether Bush did enough to protect Americans before the attacks. Kerry, who spent much of the past week on vacation in Idaho, said he had not heard or read any of the testimony before the commission.

He nevertheless criticized the administration for having "stonewalled" the investigation. Bush originally opposed the panel's creation, then opposed its request for a two-month extension of its work, but eventually relented on both counts.

NASA jet believed to hit record 5,000 mph

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Three years after its first test flight ended in an explosion, NASA on Saturday successfully launched an experimental jet that the agency believes reached a record-setting speed of about 5,000 mph.

The unpiloted X-43A made an 11-second powered flight, then went through some twists and turns during a six-minute glide before plunging into the Pacific Ocean about 400 miles off the California coast.

"It was fun all the way to Mach 7," said Joel Sitz, project manager at NASA's Dryden Flight Research Center.

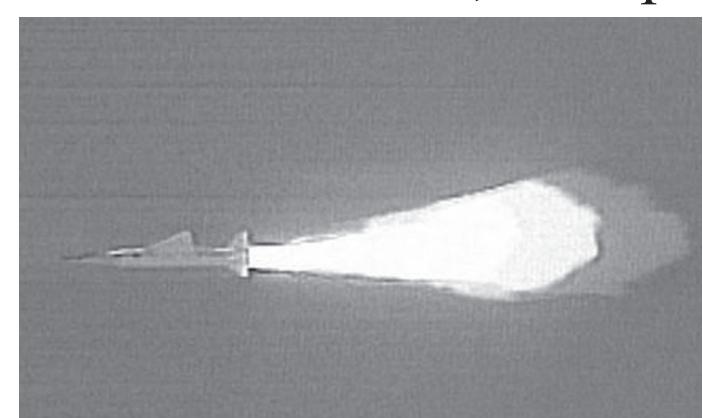
Flight engineer Lawrence Huebner said preliminary data indicated the needle-nosed jet reached a maximum speed of slightly over seven times the speed of sound, or about 5,000 mph, after a rocket boosted it to about 3,500 mph.

Huebner said it was the first time an "air-breathing" jet had ever traveled so fast. The rocket-powered X-15 reached Mach 6.7 in 1967.

"It's a great way to end, certainly all the sweeter because of the challenges we've had to step up to and overcome through the life of this project," said Griffin Corpening, Dryden's chief engineer on the project.

The first X-43A flight ended in failure June 2, 2001, after the modified Pegasus rocket used to accelerate the plane veered off course and was detonated. An investigation board found pre-flight analyses failed to predict how the rocket would perform, leaving its control system unable to maintain stable flight.

NASA built the X-43A un-



The booster on the hypersonic X-43A ignites after taking off from Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., on Saturday. NASA on Saturday successfully launched the X-43A, an experimental jet designed to reach speeds approaching 5,000 mph.

der a \$250 million program to develop and test an exotic type of engine called a supersonic combustion ramjet, or scramjet.

In theory, the air-breathing engine could propel an airplane to speeds of Mach 7 or faster, enabling around-the-world flights that would take several hours. The Department of Defense also is working on the technology, which it's eyeing for use in bombers that quickly could reach targets anywhere on the globe.

The 12-foot-long, 2,800-pound X-43A was mounted on a Pegasus rocket booster and carried to an altitude of 40,000 feet by a modified B-52 bomber, which took off from Edwards Air Force Base in the high desert.

A few seconds after the craft was dropped, the rocket flared, sending the jet skyward on a streak of flame and light. At about 100,000 feet, the rocket dropped away.

The scramjet took over, using up about two pounds of gaseous

hydrogen fuel before gliding. Applause rang out in the control center at Dryden Flight Research Center at Edwards.

Technological hurdles mean it will be decades before such a plane could enter service. And NASA's role in developing the technology remains in doubt, as the agency recently cut funding for more advanced versions of the X-43A.

Engineers have pursued scramjet technology because it could allow rocket-speed travel but with considerable savings in weight. Rockets must carry their own oxygen to combust the fuel they carry aboard; scramjets can scoop it out of the atmosphere.

In scramjets, oxygen is rammed into a combustion chamber where it mixes with fuel and spontaneously ignites. To work, the engine must be traveling at about five times the speed of sound - requiring an initial boost that only a rocket can provide.

A third X-43A could fly as early as the fall.

NMHC

World

Hamas leader promises revenge

By HUSSEIN DAKROUB

AP WRITER

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP)—Israel faces an “earthquake” of revenge for killing Hamas founder Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the militant group’s Syrian-based leader said Saturday.

Yassin, a quadriplegic, was killed in an Israeli missile attack Monday as he was being wheeled out of a Gaza mosque. Israel has accused him of planning attacks that have killed hundreds of Israelis.

“I say with absolute certainty that the assassination of Sheik Ahmed Yassin will cause an earthquake to the Zionists,” Khaled Mashaal told Dubai-based TV station Al-Arabiya. He said the revenge “will spare no targets.”

Mashaal, who heads Hamas’ political bureau, also criticized the United States for vetoing a U.N. Security Council resolution Friday condemning Israel for killing Yassin, but said his group will not attack U.S. targets in the Middle East.

He warned, however, that

“America’s bias” toward Israel and its occupation of Iraq were creating enemies for it throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds.

“Hamas’ ... battle is inside Palestine and against the Zionist occupation ... but I cannot predict what the reaction of Arab and Islamic masses might be,” he said.

The United States lists Hamas as a terrorist organization.

Mashaal also urged Arab leaders not to revive a peace initiative with the Jewish state, saying “peace with Israel has become an illusion.”

Some Arab states were hoping to revive a 2002 peace initiative toward Israel at an Arab League summit, but the meeting collapsed Saturday two days before it was to start, in part because of differences over the proposal.

Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, leader of Lebanon-based Hezbollah, told a rally in Beirut his group was closing ranks with Hamas in the battle against the Jewish state. Hezbollah has launched numerous attacks



against Israeli forces.

He taunted Israel, whose army chief suggested after Yassin’s death that Nasrallah and Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat could be next on Israel’s hit list.

“The talk about assassinations does not frighten us,” Nasrallah said. “I tell the Israelis that we are here in Lebanon waiting for them.”

Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, leader of Hezbollah guerrilla group, speaks during a Hezbollah rally held in south of Beirut, Lebanon Saturday night. At rear is a poster of Sheik Ahmed Yassin.

AP



AP

French lawyer Jacques Verges, seen in this Feb. 24, 2004 file photo, announced Saturday he has been asked to defend former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

French lawyer says he will defend Saddam

PARIS (AP)—A French lawyer, known for defending terrorists and a Nazi leader, said Saturday he will defend Saddam Hussein.

Jacques Verges told France-Inter radio he had received a letter from Saddam’s family requesting him to defend the former Iraqi leader in court. U.S. officials have said they will bring Saddam to trial for alleged crimes against Iraqi people. But the location of any trial and its format and date have not yet been decided.

The letter from Saddam’s family read: “In my capacity as nephew of President Saddam Hussein, I commission you officially by this letter to assure the

defense of my uncle,” Verges said. He did not name the person who sent the letter.

Saddam is being held by U.S. forces at an undisclosed location.

Verges has defended Venezuelan terrorist Carlos the Jackal, whose real name is Ilich Ramirez. He gained international notoriety during the Cold War for staging a string of deadly bombings, assassinations and hostage seizures.

The French lawyer also defended, Klaus Barbie, a Nazi Gestapo chief in France in World War II, who was convicted of crimes against humanity in Lyon, France.

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Life & Style

Health & Fitness

Seeing fit to come out of hibernation

By ANNIE LINSKEY
THE BALTIMORE SUN

When spring rolls around, many athletes and weekend warriors end their winter hibernation and hope to regain peak form in their favorite sport.

The two times of year people focus most on fitness are "just after New Year's — and that peters out pretty quickly — and now, when the weather starts getting warm," says Steven Horwitz, a chiropractor and chairman of the Maryland Council on Physical Fitness.

Getting in shape — especially after an injury or an extended layoff — is not an instant process, and trying to return to your favorite sport too quickly, with visions of those glory days in your mind, can spell trouble.

Although you don't have to look far to find fad workouts that promise quick results, Rob Marra, a personal trainer at the Meadow Mill Athletic Club in Baltimore, recommends starting slowly and setting reasonable goals.

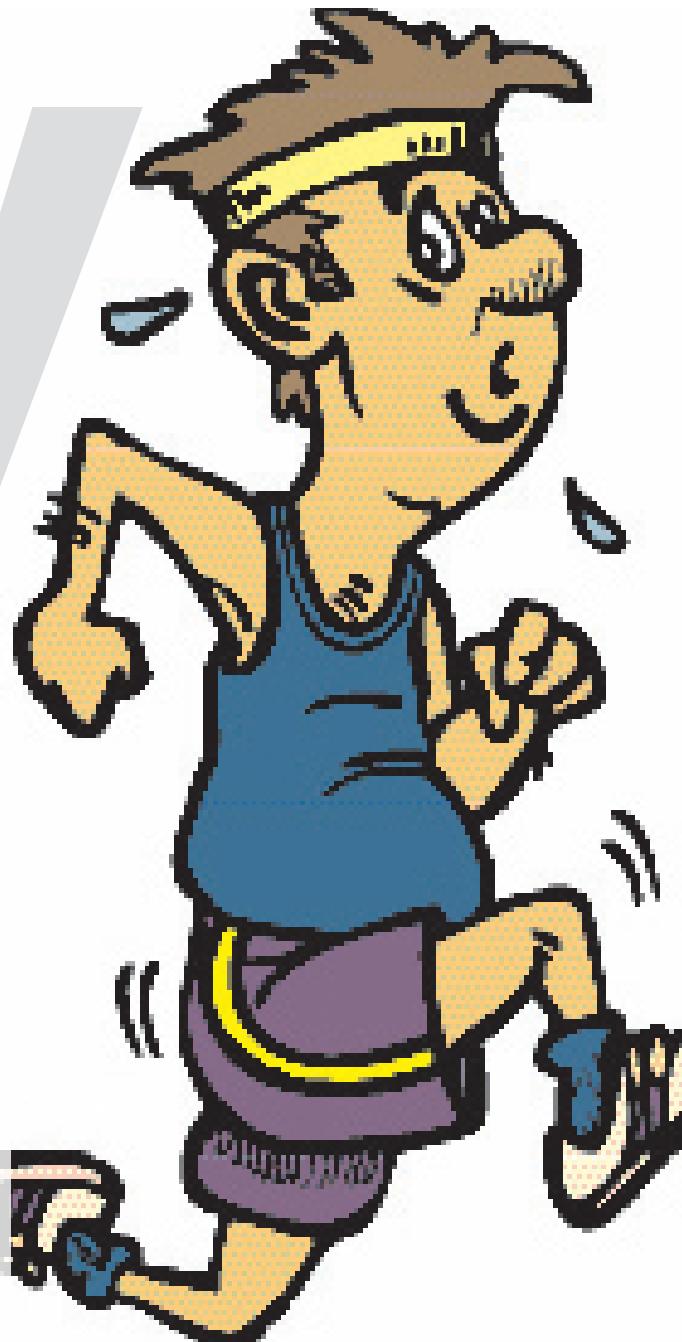
In most cases, Marra says, it will take from two to three months to begin to see a difference in your physique if you're starting an exercise program or resuming one after a long layoff.

"If you're consistent, and do everything you should do, you'll lose a few pounds in the first weeks, and at week 12 you'll start shedding a pound a week. You're talking about three to four months to get in shape for summer."

John Poitras, head strengthening and conditioning coach at Towson University in Maryland, says walking "will teach you a lot about what you can and can not do. Walk for a half an hour — see if your knees hurt, see if your hips ache. If not, try a light jog next time. The most important thing is to start slowly."

Poitras also encourages stretching. "You want to stretch the muscles you will use when you are working out," he says. "For walking, this includes quads, hamstrings and calf muscles."

The approach some use of trying to get in shape for a sport, such as soccer, by playing the sport is something the experts discourage.



"You cannot play a sport to get in shape. You must get in shape to play a sport," Horwitz says.

"The biggest thing a weekend warrior wants to avoid is just showing up and going out with an all-out sprint," adds Barry Kagan, assistant strength and conditioning coach at the University of Maryland, College Park. "That is when the muscles are going to scream out."

Kagan adds, "Your body — especially if you've been sitting around all winter — is just not ready to start cutting, or planting one leg, and kicking. The physical aspects that come with soccer are pretty demanding on the legs, never mind the upper body and the back."

To prepare for a sport, Kagan suggests doing activities that

important role in regaining your fitness level. But start slowly. One to two sets of an exercise for not more than 12 repetitions is about right. "The weights can be very light at first," Kagan says.

Getting off the couch

If you spent the winter on the couch, you were not alone. About 25 percent of all Americans do "little or no physical activity," according to a recent report from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But spring is here, and it's time to get back out there. Here's how:

- Warm up and cool down. Gently stretch the muscles you will be using. It's also a good idea to stretch after working out.

- Start slowly. Walk for 20 minutes two or three times the first week you start getting back in shape. Listen to your body. If you don't have major aches and pains after that, start walking three to four times a week. Then try a light jog.

- Rest. Plan the days that you aren't going to work out, and enjoy the down time.

□ Mimic the sport you are

nmc abe

Kuwait asked to show 'Passion'

KUWAIT CITY (AP)—A top Shiite cleric on Saturday urged Kuwait to let Mel Gibson's controversial film "The Passion of the Christ," be shown in this conservative Muslim state because it "reveals crimes committed by Jews against Christ."

"We have called on the information minister to show this movie," Ayatollah Mohammed Baqer al-Mehri told The Associated Press. He heads the

congregation of Shiite clerics in Kuwait.

Movie theaters in this small oil-rich state are owned by a state company, and the Information Ministry has to censor and approve films to be screened. It is not known if the movie company had approached the ministry for permission to screen it.

Al-Mehri said Sunni Muslims, who control Kuwaiti politics, do not approve of person-

alizing prophets in movies, but many senior Shiite clerics do not object.

It was not immediately clear if the Kuwaiti government had banned the movie from Kuwaiti cinema screens. Kuwaiti officials were not immediately available for comment.

Religious Christian films are not shown in this traditional Muslim country, but pirated copies of Gibson's latest movie,

which depicts the last hours Jesus' life, are being circulated.

Al-Mehri said he has seen the movie and believes it is "good and there is nothing wrong with it."

Jewish organizations, however, have denounced the film as anti-Semitic and expressed fears that it would cause attacks on Jews.

Muslims view Jesus as a prophet, not as a messiah.

Nelson wants to stop Navy landing field

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP)—Country singer Willie Nelson has asked President Bush to intervene in a land dispute between farmers and the Navy over a proposed jet practice field in rural eastern North Carolina.

The Navy says it plans to build the landing field in the middle of 33,000 acres of farm-

land south of Plymouth.

In a letter to Bush this week, Nelson, who is also president of Farm Aid, raised concerns over potential damage to the nearby Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, the winter home to thousands of tundra swans and snow geese.

He also said Navy pilots would be at risk of colliding with birds.

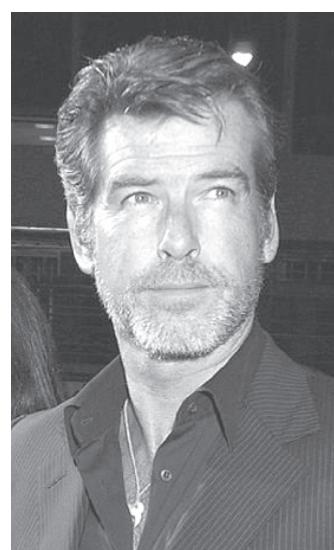
Nelson urged the president to order the Navy to find a different site, and other opponents have sent e-mails, letters and post cards to the White House.

A 19-member panel of residents and representatives from government and the military is studying the proposal.

Two lawsuits have been filed against the Navy to stop the field.



Country singer Willie Nelson shown in this Feb. 1, 2004 file photo has asked President Bush to intervene in a land dispute over a proposed jet practice field in North Carolina.



Brosnan's official site launched

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The name is com - PierceBrosnan.com. The official Web site of Pierce Brosnan - Agent 007 - is up and running, and for fans of the actor, it offers a unique peek into his life and passions.

The Web site, launched by Green-i Software and Solutions, examines Brosnan as an actor, artist and environmental activist.

"In his films he may be larger than life, but in real life Mr. Brosnan is deeply committed to his family and the environment," said Green-i President Rolf Wicklund. "We worked closely with him throughout the development of this site, and it is our hope that we have successfully captured the many facets of this extraordinary man."

The site highlights Brosnan's films, dozens of his paintings, his Irish DreamTime production company and the Official Pierce Brosnan Fan Club.

Brosnan won a legal battle to claim the Internet domain name after United Nations arbitrators ruled in his favor over a notorious "cybersquatter."



Las Vegas entertainers Siegfried & Roy, Siegfried Fischbacher, left, and Roy Uwe Ludwig Horn hold four baby white lions at the Cincinnati Zoo, in this April 26, 2001 file photo.

Siegfried & Roy to promote animated series

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Almost six months after a white tiger mauled illusionist Roy Horn of "Siegfried & Roy," forcing the long-running stage show to close, the two say they will soon be back in the entertainment business.

The duo will promote the NBC animated series, "Father of the Pride," about a family of white lions who work as performers in

their show, officials said.

"It's the beginning of a new era for Siegfried & Roy," said Bernie Yuman, manager for Horn and Siegfried Fischbacher, whose Las Vegas show made them entertainment icons.

Yuman and NBC spokeswoman Rebecca Marks in Burbank, Calif., confirmed Friday that Fischbacher and Horn have agreed with DreamWorks

head Jeffrey Katzenberg to promote the animated series slated to debut this fall.

The "Siegfried & Roy" show debuted at The Mirage hotel in 1990 and became one of the most successful and lucrative in Las Vegas, drawing an estimated 400,000 people a year and generating an estimated \$44 million in annual revenue for the Mirage's casino.

Mother of sons dreads her future as a mother-in-law

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: I have three wonderful sons, ranging in age from 12 to 19. For the last 10 years, I have had bouts of depression when I think about losing them to girlfriends or wives. I keep remembering all the negative mother-in-law jokes and the derogatory commercials I have seen. How can anyone think that a mother can turn off her love for a son because another woman might get jealous or possessive? It is pounded into everyone's head that mothers-in-law are horrible and unworthy of communication and love from their son and his family.

I am sick of it! I'm a good person. I love my sons with every ounce of my being. I'll be there for them whenever I am needed. It is horrifying to me that the first time I might say something that doesn't suit my son's wife, she'll cut me out of their lives.

Men are such doormats for their girlfriends and wives! Why don't they stand up for their mothers the way we stood up for them?

SICK OF THE BAD REP

DEAR SICK: Where did you get the idea that the majority of in-law relationships are dysfunctional? Women who welcome their daughters-in-law and don't treat them as rivals usually have warm and loving relationships. Have you ever heard of a self-fulfilling prophecy? I am concerned that your preconceptions will poison your future relationships. Please discuss them with a psychotherapist, and don't put it off.

□ □ □ □ □

DEAR ABBY: I live with a man I'll call Elmer who is, for the most part, a great guy. He accepted my son as his own and provided for him the same way he does for our daughter. We have a nice home, material comforts, and Elmer makes sure all our bills are covered if I can't afford to pay them myself.

Last year, I decided I wanted to go and swim with the dolphins—literally. I told Elmer this is a spiritual thing, something I want to do for myself and by myself. Elmer tends to be sort of a control freak, but if I stand my ground, he usually backs down. With this dolphin thing, though, he's making my life miserable.

Elmer has 1,001 reasons for me not to take the trip, none of which are valid.

What can I do to make him see that there are plenty of couples who sometimes take separate trips? He says if I love him, I won't go without him. He didn't give me this hard a time when I changed religions.

NEEDS ADVICE IN MARYLAND

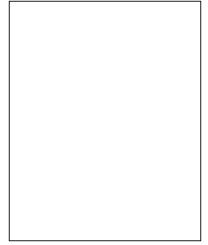
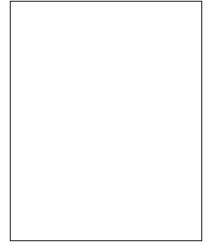
DEAR NEEDS: Since I don't know Elmer, it's hard to say what you can do to reassure him. He may be afraid that you will get in over your head—literally. Or he may feel insecure about the relationship he has with you since you are not married.

However, in life we must all follow our own spiritual paths. We must also prioritize our wishes in the order of their importance. If swimming with the dolphins is more important to you than Elmer, then you will have to dive in, even if it means swimming through the rest of your life without him.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

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